

Fragile Beauty: Art of the Ocean and Mansion Displays

Label and Display Information for Volunteers

On View: June 8, 2024-January 5, 2025

To better equip volunteers in answering questions and promoting the exhibition, this document is provided to volunteers in advance of the exhibition opening and includes the text the visitor will read in the exhibition and information pertaining to the exhibition displays. Minor edits may be made to the exhibition text featured in this document. The thumbnail images in this document are not featured on the labels, unless otherwise noted. The exhibition opens to the public in the Adirondack building on Saturday, June 8.

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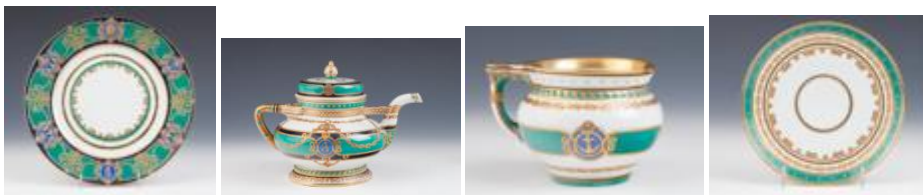
Breakfast Room

Thumbnail images are NOT on labels, unless otherwise noted.

Installation Date: June 3, 2024

Yachting and Dining in Imperial Russia

Inspired by the exhibition *Fragile Beauty: Art of the Ocean*, on view in the Adirondack Building beginning June 8, the breakfast room table is set with porcelain produced in the early 1870s for the Russian imperial yacht *Derzhava*. Emperor Alexander II commissioned court architect Ippolit Monigetti to imagine the yacht's decor and furnishings, including porcelain and glassware. Monigetti created an innovative design featuring the monogram of the emperor, the imperial orb and double-headed eagle, and anchors intertwined with cords and chains set on beautiful black, green, and blue backgrounds, visible on the porcelain pieces and glass decanter on the table. This design was appealing to Marjorie Post, who traveled the world with her yacht the *Sea Cloud*. She probably selected her first pieces from the *Derzhava* Service while in Russia in the late 1930s; there she acquired another masterpiece of design by Monigetti, the impressive lapis lazuli cabinet on view in the nearby Icon Room.



Pieces from the *Derzhava* (imperial yacht) Service

Imperial Porcelain Factory

(Russian, 1744–present)

Ippolit Monigetti, designer

(Russian, 1819–1878)

St. Petersburg, 1871–73

Porcelain

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (25.341–343)



Decanter from the *Derzhava* (imperial yacht) Service

Imperial Glass Factory

(Russian, 1777–1917)

Ippolit Monigetti, designer

(Russian, 1819–1878)

St. Petersburg, 1871–73

Glass

Museum purchase, 1988 (23.479.1–2)



Glassware from a service for the countryside imperial residences

Imperial Glass Factory

(Russian, 1777–1917)

Ivan Ivanov, designer (Russian, 1779–1848)

St. Petersburg, after 1823

Glass

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (23.58–61)



Forks and spoons from Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich's Service

François-Dominique Naudin, silversmith

(French, 1788–1840)

Paris, ca. 1819

Silver gilt

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.289)

The cutlery is set in the French manner with tines down, which allows the showcasing of the grand duke's monogram.



Knives from Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich's Service

Nicholls and Plincke (Russian, 1829–98)

St. Petersburg, 1848–92

Silver gilt, mother-of-pearl, steel

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.167)



Two saltcellars

Imperial Glass Factory

(Russian, 1777–1917)

St. Petersburg, 1881–94

Glass

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (23.108.1–2)



Tazza (footed bowl)

Russia, 1830–40

Malachite

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (21.101)

(Image is on label)



Dining Room

Thumbnail images are NOT on labels, unless otherwise noted.

Installation Date: June 3, 2024

Heavenly Blue

To celebrate Hillwood's exhibition *Fragile Beauty: Art of the Ocean*, on view in the Adirondack Building beginning June 8, the dining room table is set with an extremely rare selection of 1700s porcelain ware painted in turquoise blue, which evokes the beauty of the ocean.

In eighteenth-century Europe, princesses, princes, kings, queens, empresses, and emperors competed to find the secret of porcelain, the magical material then mastered only in Asia. In the 1740s, skillful French craft workers developed an ersatz material to replace the crucial kaolin, the type of clay necessary to obtain the white, translucent, and crystalline product. The kilns established at Vincennes near Paris in the 1740s produced soft-paste porcelain. They were later moved to the nearby city of Sèvres. The Vincennes/Sèvres porcelain quickly became renowned for its colorful backgrounds with unique milky and cloudy finishes resulting from the use of soft-paste porcelain. The heavenly blue known as *bleu céleste* was introduced in 1753. Used for the French king's service, it soon became a signature of the manufactory. The pieces on view here were made for various clients including members of the European aristocracy—such as Casimir Pignatelli, Count of Egmont; Cardinal Prince Louis de Rohan; and Francis Thomas Fitzmaurice, 3rd Earl of Kerry—and were later collected by amateurs like the Rothschilds, the Demidovs, and eventually Marjorie Post.



Tureen and platter

Vincennes Porcelain Manufactory

(French, 1740–56)

Attributed to Jean-Claude Duplessis, designer (French, 1699–1774)

Attributed to Claude-Joseph Cardin, painter (French, active 1749–87): flowers

Vincennes, 1754–55

Soft-paste porcelain

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.1.1–2)



Pair of three-part saltcellars

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

(French, 1740–present)

Sèvres, ca. 1770

Soft-paste porcelain

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.28.1–2)



Pair of saltcellars

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

(French, 1740–present)

Attributed to Decambos, painter and gilder (French, active 1776–88)
Sèvres, 1782
Soft-paste porcelain
Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.31.1–2)



Four round dishes

Vincennes Porcelain Manufactory
(French, 1740–56)
Vincennes, 1755–56
Soft-paste porcelain
Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.14.1–4)



Two diamond-shaped dishes

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
(French, 1740–present)
Jacques-François Micaud père, painter (French, active 1757–1810)
Sèvres, 1778
Soft-paste porcelain
Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.16.1–2)



Four shell-shaped dishes

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
(French, 1740–present)
Sèvres, after 1784
Soft-paste porcelain
Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.41.2, 24.42.2, 24.43.1–2)



Plates and ice cups from the Rohan Service

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
(French, 1740–present)
Sèvres, 1771–72
Soft-paste porcelain
Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.65.1–12; 24.66.1–12)



Glassware

France, 1700s
Glass, gilded decoration
Gift of Eleanor Close Barzin, 1975 (23.312-314)



Silverware from Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich's Service

François-Dominique Naudin, silversmith (French, 1788–1840)
Paris, ca. 1819

Silver gilt

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.289)

Museum purchase, 2021 (2021.1)

The cutlery is set in the French manner with tines down, which allows the showcasing of the grand duke's monogram.



Pair of candelabras

St. Petersburg, late 1700s

Glass, gilt bronze, crystal, marble

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (14.10.1–2)



Pair of bathing figures

France, 1770s–early 1800s

Marble, gilt bronze

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (22.4.3–4)

(Image is on label)



Large Closet

Installation Date: May 20, 2024



Evening dress

House of Paquin (French, 1891–1956)

Ana de Pombo, designer (Spanish, 1889–1985)

Retailed at Bonwit Teller (American, 1895–2000s)

Paris, 1936

Cotton velvet, silk tulle, plastic sequins, silk satin, horsehair

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (48.85)



Delikatissima

Christian Louboutin

(French, b. 1963)

Paris, Fall/Winter 2018

Chantilly lace, crepe satin

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives

This evening dress incorporates a traditional, mid-1930s silhouette featuring short, gathered sleeves, a low, curved neckline, and full skirt achieved by tiers of horsehair. Its ornamentation is unexpected and mysterious—setting the dress apart from others of the period with its amorphous appliqués of black velvet trimmed in shimmering black sequins. The overall effect evokes the darkened depths of the ocean floor.

Retailed at the popular New York City department store Bonwit Teller, in its couture salon, the gown was designed by the House of Paquin and dates to its Winter 1936 collection. One can imagine the black lacy shoes on view nearby, inspired by sea anemones, and created by contemporary footwear designer Christian Louboutin, as a magnificent accessory to this gown.

(Image is on label)



Winter 1936 sketch from the House of Paquin

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

(Image is on label)



Lace Case

Installation Date: May 21, 2024

Take a peek inside these drawers to view pieces from Marjorie Post’s lace and accessories collections.

Lace Case Drawer 1



Insertions

Belgium, ca. 1925

Linen bobbin lace

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.221.1–3)



Collar

Italy, 1900s

Linen needlepoint lace

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.214)



Lingerie insets

Belgium, early 1900s

Linen bobbin lace

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.220.1-2)

Lace Case Drawer 2



Cuffs

Italy, 1800s

Linen needlepoint lace

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.303.1-3)



Cuffs

Italy, 1700s

Linen needlepoint and bobbin lace

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.301.1-2)



Cuffs

Italy, late 1800s–early 1900s

Linen needlepoint lace

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.304.1-2)

Lace Case Drawer 3



Handkerchiefs

New York, ca. 1906

Linen, silk

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.164, 45.165.1–2, 45.172, 45.174, 45.176.3)



Custom sachets

Possibly Paris, ca. 1920

Linen needlepoint lace, silk faille

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.517.2, 45.517.7)



Sachets

Elizabeth Arden

(American, 1910–present)

New York, ca. 1950

Silk foulard

Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (45.518.1, 45.519)

Small Closet

Installation Date: May 20, 2024

Christian Louboutin

The exhibition *Fragile Beauty: Art of the Ocean*, on view in the Adirondack Building beginning June 8, celebrates the ocean through Hillwood’s collection of exquisite works of art, as well as a selection of relevant pieces by contemporary artists and designers who continue to be inspired by the ocean. Hillwood secured the loan of several pieces in the exhibition and the mansion that speak to Christian Louboutin’s designs inspired by the fragile beauty of the ocean.

Christian Louboutin (French, born 1963) is one of the most celebrated shoe designers in the world. His iconic red sole has become an epitome of luxury and of French fashion and know-how. Louboutin studied in Paris, where he developed a passion for shoe design. He spent time in Parisian shoemaker Charles Jourdan’s workshop and considered designer Roger Vivier his mentor. Louboutin then embarked on a career as an independent designer and collaborated with various Parisian *maisons* (referring to design houses). He opened his first store in Paris in 1991. Louboutin’s shoes have also been celebrated as works of art and been featured in several exhibitions.



Casanoë

Unique piece

Christian Louboutin Atelier

(French, 1991–present)

Paris, 2022

Suede, shells, mother-of-pearl

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives



Piloutin Manila

Limited Edition

Christian Louboutin (French, b. 1963)

Paris, Fall/Winter 2018

Calf, strass, shells, ostrich feathers

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives

(Image is on label)



Adam's Bedroom

Installation Date: May 20, 2024

Christian Louboutin

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Louis Octopus

Christian Louboutin

(French, b. 1963)

Paris, Spring/Summer 2016

Suede, calf, strass, embroidery

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives



Octopusspuss

Christian Louboutin

(French, b. 1963)

Paris, Spring/Summer 2016
Patent calf, suede, strass, embroidery
Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives



David at the Beach

Christian Louboutin
(French, b. 1963)
Paris, Spring/Summer 2016
Suede, calf, patent calf, cotton denim, embroidery
Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives

(Image is on label)



Second Floor Library

Installation Date: May 21, 2024

Marjorie Post loved pearls; they were a substantial part of her jewelry collection from early adulthood. While she wore many strands of natural pearls, she also embraced gem-quality cultured pearls, which began to be produced in Japan in the late nineteenth century. Her library, mirroring her interests, holds several books on pearls, including two in this case. Hillwood's Archives and Special Collections department continues to acquire rare books connected to Post's collections and interests, the newest of which, Edwin Streeter's *Pearls and Pearling Life*, is included here.

All images, reproductions of archival documents, and books displayed here are from Hillwood's Archives and Special Collections.

(Image is on label)



The Natural History of the Precious Stones and of the Precious Metals

By Charles W. King
London: Bell and Daldy, 1867

The chapter on pearls in this volume is entitled "Margarita," the Latin conversion of the Greek *margarites*, which in turn derived from uncertain origins, possibly Persian or Sanskrit. In exploring the reasons for their esteemed value in the ancient world, the author declares that pearls "held the highest rank amongst precious stones, and for an obvious reason—their beauty is entirely due to Nature, being susceptible of no improvement from art."

Pearls and Pearling Life

By Edwin William Streeter
London: George Bell and Sons, 1886

Edwin W. Streeter was a jeweler, goldsmith, and gem merchant, highly regarded for his texts on those topics. This exceedingly rare volume on pearls, recently acquired by Archives and Special Collections, joins another work of Streeter's that Marjorie Post purchased in 1962. Discussing the origins of the rare black pearl, Streeter notes that early naturalists attributed its color to its formation "under the gloomy influence of the shades of evening," or by oysters that were especially aged or diseased. He rightly notes that the influence of the pearl's nacre, or inner shell lining, is chiefly responsible. Beyond its ability to provide exquisite color, nacre is tremendously strong, and scientists are hoping to unlock its secrets to create the next generation of robust, lightweight materials for a wide variety of uses.



Reproduction

The Book of the Pearl: The History, Art, Science, and Industry of the Queen of Gems

By George Frederick Kunz and Charles Hugh Stevenson
New York: Century Company, 1908

Given their beauty and value, the hunt for pearls caused severe overfishing of the mollusks that produce them, often with disastrous consequences. Starting in the 1850s, a "pearl rush" akin to the search for gold in the western United States quickly decimated freshwater mussel populations in rivers and streams from the Mississippi River valley all the way to Maine. Exacerbating this overharvesting was the secondary business of selling tons of the empty shells to button manufacturers, beginning in the 1890s. As the authors of this book pointed out, the discovery of even a single gem-quality pearl "represents the destruction of tens of thousands of mollusks." In their estimation, all the destruction produced wealth for almost no one: "taking the country as a whole, it is probable that the total find has been sufficient to pay the average fisherman little if any more than \$1 for each day's work."

According to the international nonprofit Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, mussels around the world still face a significant threat, with an estimated 45 percent of all freshwater mussels "near threatened" or "threatened"—or already extinct.



Reproduction

Adirondack building

Thumbnail images are NOT on labels, unless otherwise noted.

Donor Panel

Fragile Beauty Art of the Ocean

is supported by

The Marjorie Merriweather Post Foundation
Ellen MacNeille Charles

Sophie and Val Hawkins
Martha R. Johnston and Robert T. Coonrod
Dr. Catherine M. Chura
Kyra Cheremeteff and Thomas W. Richardson
Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Dudley, Jr.
Ms. Nedenia Rumbough and
Mr. Jan Roosenburg
Janice H. Brambilla
Simon and Nancy Sidamon-Eristof

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Intro Panel

Fragile Beauty Art of the Ocean

Fragile Beauty: Art of the Ocean celebrates the ocean through Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens' collection of seascapes and exquisite works of art, and a selection of relevant pieces by contemporary artists Morel Doucet, Courtney Mattison, Théo Mercier, and designer Christian Louboutin. An object of fascination that is both admired and feared, the ocean covers more than 70 percent of the Earth.

Hillwood's founder, Marjorie Merriweather Post (1887–1973), lived near water in many of her homes, loved sailing aboard her yacht, and collected beautiful works of art made of precious materials found in the ocean or inspired by the beauty and mystery of the sea. These works also speak to the continuous connections between the ocean and human history, adventure, and tragedies.

Human societies have benefited from the ocean's rich and diverse fauna, flora, and resources for thousands of years. But now, the fragile balance between the ocean's ecosystem and societies is suffering from high levels of exploitation and pollution due to human overconsumption. As a result, the United Nations included the preservation of the ocean as one of its seventeen sustainable development goals, stating: "Healthy oceans and seas are essential to human existence and life on Earth."

Unless otherwise noted, objects on display were bequeathed to Hillwood by Marjorie Post in 1973. All images and archival documents are from Hillwood's Archives and Special Collections unless otherwise cited.

📷 Photography without flash is welcome.

Case Panel



The Christening of Land and Water

Morel Doucet

(Haitian American, b. 1990)

2022

Slip-casted white earthenware

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Myrtis

(Image is on label)



Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Myrtis

Morel Doucet (Haitian American, born 1990) is a multidisciplinary artist and arts educator based in Miami. Doucet's work explores the Black diaspora experience of climate-related gentrification, migrations, and displacement. Doucet's inspiration for his ceramics, illustrations, and prints is drawn from diverse Indigenous cultures, including of the Amazon, Australia, and West Africa. His artworks have been featured in numerous publications and national and international exhibitions.

Case Panel



Underwater

Unique piece

Christian Louboutin Atelier

(French, 1991–present)

Paris, 2022

Suede, shells

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives

(Image is on label)



© Jean-Baptiste Mondino

Christian Louboutin (French, born 1963) is one of the most celebrated shoe designers in the world. His iconic red sole has become an epitome of luxury and of French fashion and know-how. Louboutin studied in Paris, where he developed a passion for shoe design. He spent time in Parisian shoemaker Charles Jourdan's workshop and considered designer Roger Vivier his mentor. Louboutin then embarked on a career as an independent designer and collaborated with various Parisian *maisons* (referring to design houses). He opened his first store in Paris in 1991. Louboutin's shoes have also been celebrated as works of art and been featured in several exhibitions. Many of his creations speak to his inspirations and interests, including the fragile beauty of the ocean.

Section Wall Panel

Marjorie Post and the Ocean

Hillwood's founder, Marjorie Post, had long developed a great interest in the ocean and water in general. Her favorite homes often included direct access to various bodies of water; even her New York apartment, a penthouse triplex comprising fifty-four rooms, overlooked the two large reservoirs in Central Park (one was covered over in 1937). Mar-A-Lago, her famous Palm Beach winter residence, was literally built between the Atlantic Ocean and a lagoon. In the 1920s, Post also enjoyed a large estate, the first Hillwood, on the North Shore of Long Island, and Camp Topridge in the Adirondack Mountains, located

between Spectacle Ponds and Upper St. Regis Lake, was accessible only by boat or floatplane during her lifetime. To cruise the ocean, Post commissioned a large yacht, the *Sea Cloud*.

(Image is on label)



While on board the *Sea Cloud*, Post and guests shot films. A compilation of excerpts from those films can be seen on the screen below (about 2 minutes in length). Hillwood will continue to explore Post's famous yacht, the *Sea Cloud*, in an upcoming exhibition opening in February 2025.

(Video on wall label)



(Image is on label)



View of the Black Sea from the Alupka Palace, Crimea, Ukraine, Marjorie Post's Scrapbook, 1938

(Image is on label)



Marjorie Post visiting the Swallow's Nest, Crimea, Ukraine, Marjorie Post's Scrapbook, 1938.

(Image is on label)



The Swallow's Nest, Crimea, Ukraine, Marjorie Post's Scrapbook, 1938.

(Image is on label)



Wave in Yalta, Crimea, Ukraine, Marjorie Post's Scrapbook, 1938.

(Image is on label)



Painter Ivan Aivazovsky's house and museum in Feodosiia, Crimea, Ukraine, Marjorie Post's Scrapbook, 1938

One of Marjorie Post's trips on the Sea Cloud took her to Crimea in Ukraine. There, in May 1938, she discovered the beauty of the Black Sea and the mastery of one of the most famous marine painters, Ivan Aivazovsky (Hovhannes Aivazian) (1817–1900).

Born into an Armenian family, Romantic artist Ivan Aivazovsky has been described as "the painter of the ocean." He is credited with having created more than six thousand paintings during his lifetime, and he wrote, "My life is the Sea." From 1836, he traveled around Europe and the Mediterranean, sketching the beauty of the ocean, and in 1844, he became the official painter of the Russian imperial navy. In 1892, he visited Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, as well as Niagara Falls. Aivazovsky's main residence was in Feodosiia, Crimea, where the painter created an art gallery, which was transformed into a museum upon his death.

On May 27, 1938, Post visited the museum and mentioned in her scrapbook "the famous marine painter...the luminosity of the water he painted is wonderful." Later, visiting the fabulous Alupka Palace, she wrote that "the steps lead down to the Black Sea—and the Aivazovsky Rock where the famous marine & moonlight painter used to come very often." Visiting the famous Swallow's Nest near Yalta on May 28, Post wrote, "This Crimean coast is unbelievably lovely—filled with romance!!!" and added, "No wonder he [Aivazovsky] painted such lovely things seeing them all the time."

Rarely as expressive regarding her artistic impressions about a painter, Post acquired Aivazovsky's photographed portrait as well as small-scale works by the painter mainly known for his large-scale paintings depicting the ocean.

Case Panel



Portrait of Ivan Aivazovsky and seascape

Ivan Aivazovsky, painter (Armenian, 1817–1900, active in the Russian Empire)

1887–88

Photograph, oil on canvas

(56.1)



Seascape

Attributed to Ivan Aivazovsky, painter (Armenian, 1817–1900, active in the Russian Empire)

Late 1800s

Oil on canvas

(51.84)



Seascape

Attributed to Ivan Aivazovsky, painter (Armenian, 1817–1900, active in the Russian Empire)

Late 1800s

Oil on canvas

(51.85)



Seascape

Attributed to Ivan Aivazovsky, painter (Armenian, 1817–1900, active in the Russian Empire)
Late 1800s
Oil on canvas
(51.86)

Wall Panel



In the center of the room:
Hooked rug with mermaids
United States, early 1900s
Wool
(42.25)

This rug speaks to Marjorie Post's love for textiles. It features two mermaids holding wine glasses and a sailing ship in the distance with the inscription "Sailors Beware." It alludes to some folk traditions that associate these aquatic creatures with danger. In Greek mythology, sirens are sometimes depicted as mermaidlike creatures. Sailors were threatened with being bewitched to death by their irresistible songs.

Section Panel

Underwater worlds, deities, and sea creatures

Throughout history, the ocean has played a significant role in the cultural and religious practices of human societies. Home to gods, goddesses, and nautical creatures, and present at the origin of the world in cosmogonies, the ocean is essential to life. This section explores the myths and underwater worlds that inspired artistic creations from diverse cultures and through various media.



Treasures of the Sea
Rolf Niczky (German, 1881–1950)
After Hans Makart (Austrian, 1840–1884)
Munich, 1900
Oil on canvas
Gift of General Foods, 1978 (51.206)

This monumental painting is one of the largest pictures in Hillwood's collection. It features allegorical figures harvesting underwater treasures, including fish, pearls, corals, and shells. Artist Rolf Niczky copied it after an 1870 original by painter Hans Makart today at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Celebrated in Vienna and elsewhere in Europe, Makart's work was often reproduced by students such as Niczky, who trained as an artist in Munich, where the original painting by Makart was kept in the early 1900s. The rich palette and luxurious baroque setting are typical of Makart, who taught the celebrated Gustav Klimt (1862–1918).

Case Panel

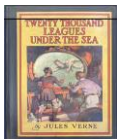
(Image panel on wall)



Pictured above:

The Nautilus

Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea

Jules Verne

(French, 1828–1905)

Charles Scribner's Sons

(American, 1846–present)

New York, 1941

Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea is one of the most famous novels by French writer Jules Verne. The work was first published in book form in 1871 with many illustrations evoking the extraordinary ocean explorations by Captain Nemo on board his underwater ship, the *Nautilus*, an elaborate submarine well ahead of its time. The acclaimed story and other writings by Verne inspired many artistic works, including movies as early as 1916, TV shows, and the nearby *Juliverna* shoe model by designer Christian Louboutin.



Juliverna

Christian Louboutin

(French, b. 1963)

Paris, 2022

Wooden mold, shells

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives

(Image panel on wall)



Pictured above:

Marjorie Post as Queen Gulnare from the Arabian Nights

New York, 1925

Photograph

(reproduction)

In this photo, Marjorie Post wears a fancy costume for a masquerade ball in the 1920s. Post's outfit was inspired by Queen Gulnare, one of the legendary figures in *One Thousand and One Nights*, often known as the *Arabian Nights*. Compiled in Arabic, the series of folktales includes many stories related to the sea and underwater worlds and creatures. In the stories, Gulnare, daughter of a ruler of an undersea kingdom, is captured, enslaved, and sold to the king of Persia. They fall in love and marry, and she becomes Persia's queen.

(Image on wall)



Pictured above:

Scene from Sadko featured in *Skazki Tales and Legends of Old Russia*

Ida Zeitlin, author
Theodore Nadejen, illustrator
Farrar & Rinehart, publisher
Murray Hill, NY, 1926
Print (reproduction)



Box with a scene from *Sadko*

Aristarkh Dydykin (Russian, 1874–1954)
Palekh, Russia, 1940
Lacquer, papier-mâché, tempera, brass
Gift of Madame Augusto Rosso, 1970 (35.48)



Box with a scene from *Sadko*

Vladimir Remiznikov (Russian, b. 1932)
Palekh, Russia, 1960
Lacquer, papier-mâché, tempera
(35.26.2–3)

Sadko, a merchant from Novgorod, is the main character of a Russian medieval tale (*bylina*). A talented musician, he performs his music on the shore and it pleases the king of the sea, who gives him an opportunity to become rich. Disrespectful to the king after such generosity, Sadko sinks into the sea, where he has to perform for the ruler. Sadko finally escapes after marrying the nymph Chernava, whom he leaves behind to return to his wife on land. The legend inspired many works, including an opera by composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, poetry, a movie, and numerous decorative objects.

(Image on wall)



Pictured above:

Visual from *Drexciya—The Quest*

Print (reproduction)



The Book of Drexciya, vol. 1

Abdul Qadim Haqq (American, b. 1968)
The Drexciyan Empire
Detroit, 2019

(Image on label)

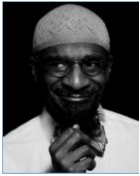


Photo Credit Marie Staggat

Abdul Qadim Haqq (American, born 1968), also known as Haqq and the Ancient, is a visual artist from Detroit. In the late 1990s, he collaborated with the group Drexciya to illustrate its 1999 *Neptune's Lair* album. Inspired by the underwater world envisioned by the duo, Haqq created the graphic novel *Drexciya*, which was released with the collaboration of scriptwriter and musician Dai Sato (Japanese, born 1969) in 2019. The second volume came out in 2021.



Drexciya—The Quest

Submerge, producer

Qamar Digital Imaging, designer

Sound of Detroit (BMI)/Mad Mike Music (BMI)/Hyperspace (BMI), publisher

Detroit, 1997

The Afrofuturist nautical myth envisioned by Drexciya is inhabited by the descendants of the babies of enslaved, pregnant African women who jumped from slave ships to escape their tragic fate or were thrown overboard on their way to the Americas. Surviving and adapting to the underwater conditions, these children create a parallel world in the ocean.



Courtesy of Ele-King Magazine, photo by Kumiko Nakata

Drexciya (American, 1992–2002) was an American electro duo from Detroit formed by musicians James Stinson (American, 1969–2002) and Gerald Donald (American, born 1980). Their electronic music albums envisioning an underwater world are: *The Quest* (1997), *Neptune's Lair* (1999), *Harnessed the Storm* (2002), and *Grava 4* (2002). The duo ended with the death of Stinson in 2002. Donald continues his career as a musician and producer.

Case panel

(Image is on label)



Botticelli's Birth of Venus

Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Plaque featuring the Birth of Venus

Europe, late 1800s

Porcelain, frame

Gift of General Foods, 1978 (26.243)



Tankard featuring Venus riding on a shell

Peter Andreas Möller, silversmith (Danish, active in the Russian Empire, 1794–1838)

St. Petersburg, 1829

Silver

(12.208.1–2)



Vase featuring the Birth of Venus

Ernst Wahliiss Alexandra

Porcelain Works, manufacturer (Bohemian (Czech Republic), 1905-1929)

Turn-Tepliz, early 1900s

Porcelain

Gift of General Foods, 1978 (26.242.2)



Bowl featuring Neptune

Austria, probably Vienna, late

1800s

Agate, silver, enamel, pearls

(21.109)

In Roman mythology, Neptune is the god of the sea (known as Poseidon in Greek mythology). He is often represented with seahorses, dolphins, and other sea creatures, holding a trident: a three-pronged spear. Nautical deities were often invoked, including various offerings, to bless the launching of seagoing vessels.



Botticella

Christian Louboutin (French, b. 1963)

Paris, Spring/Summer 2018

Suede

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives



Le Mariage de Venus

Unique piece

Christian Louboutin Atelier (French, 1991–present)

Paris, 2022

Suede, calf, shells, strass

Courtesy of Maison Christian Louboutin Archives

To learn more about the artist, please refer to his biography near the entrance, and to see more shoes by Christian Louboutin, please visit the mansion.

The goddess Venus, a Roman adaptation of the Greek Aphrodite, was associated with love, as well as prosperity and victory. The embodiment of love and sexuality, she is often represented nude. Her “birth” in a seashell, emerging already as an adult from the sea foam, has inspired Western artists since antiquity. One of the most famous representations is Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* (ca. 1484), a masterpiece now at the Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, reproduced at left. This work, along with her marriage to Vulcan, god of fire and metalworking, inspired French designer Christian Louboutin, among many others.



Olokun

Morel Doucet (Haitian American, b. 1990)

2022

Slip-casted white earthenware

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Myrtis

This figure takes inspiration from Olokun, a water deity of the Yoruba religion in West Africa. Olokun was born with the sea and rules it. The deity, depicted as male, female, and androgynous, embodies the riches that come from the water—the ocean and the rivers that flow into it.

To learn more about the artist, please refer to his biography near the entrance.

Case Panel

Mermaids

Mermaids and mermen appear in the tales and legends of many cultures. Half human and half fish, the mythical creatures have inspired art throughout the centuries, as shown by the selection of nearby artworks, which include a mermaid dress that Marjorie Post wore, the design of which evokes the shape of a mermaid with a fish tail.



Mermaid- and shell-shaped double dish

Germany, late 1800s–mid-1900s

Vermeil

(12.293.1)



Vase with scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and mermaid-shaped handles

Imperial Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1744–present)

St. Petersburg, early 1800s

Porcelain

(25.280)



Evening dress

Oldric Royce, designer (Czech American, 1896–1991)

New York, 1955–60

Silk crêpe, nylon organza, chiffon, sequins

(48.115.1–2)

Case Panel

The Rococo Shell

The proportion and symmetry of the scallop shell, associated with the birth of Venus, goddess of love and beauty in Roman mythology, have inspired Western art for centuries. The seashell is associated with the naturalistic design and patterns of the Rococo period and is present in various forms, sometimes distorted, on many artistic expressions of this successful style of the 1700s and in manifestations of its 1800s revival.

Can you identify the seashell shape, form, pattern, or iridescent colors as the inspiration in all the objects featured here?



Back row (left to right):

Shell-shaped dishes (*Comptier à Coquille*)

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, 1740–present)

Sèvres, France, after 1764

Soft-paste porcelain

(24.74.1, 24.41.2, 24.42.1, 24.44.1, 24.149.79)



Front row (left to right):

Tankard

Moscow, 1751

Silver, silver gilt
(12.17)



Vase (*Cuvette Mahon*)

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, 1740–present)
Sèvres, France, 1757
Soft-paste porcelain
(24.91)



Spoons from the Orlov Service

Imperial Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1744–present)
St. Petersburg, 1762–65
Porcelain
(25.237.1–6)



Perfume bottle

Staffordshire, Great Britain, ca. 1765
Enamel, copper, gilt copper
(15.148)

Case Panel



Back, left to right:

Shell-shaped dish and saltcellar from the Peterhof Banquet Service

Imperial Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1744–present)
After Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, 1740–present)
St. Petersburg, 1825–94
Porcelain
On loan from Kathleen Durdin (IL2022.3.29, IL2022.3.36)



Shell-shaped dish

Gardner Porcelain Manufactory (Russian, 1766–1892)
Verbilki, Russia, mid-1800s
Porcelain
Gift of Madame Augusto Rosso, 1966 (25.448.1)



Shell-shaped dish

Derby Porcelain Factory (British, 1756–present)
Derby, Great Britain, 1810–40
Porcelain
Gift of Mrs. Augustus Riggs, 1975 (26.162.39)



Shell-shaped dish from the Farm Palace Service Imperial Porcelain Factory

(Russian, 1744–present)
St. Petersburg, 1892
Porcelain
(25.347.1)



Shell-shaped dish from a dinner service

Attributed to Kuznetsov Factory (Russian, 1832–present)
Novo-Khariatonovo, Russia, ca. 1884
Porcelain
(25.193.20)



Shell-shaped dish

Kornilov Brothers Factory (Russian, 1835–2004)
St. Petersburg, mid-1800s
Porcelain
(25.155.1)



Front left:

Toast warmer

Great Britain, 1900s
Silver-plated metal
(14.295)



Candy dish

Germany, 1900s

Gilt metal
(14.75.1)



Front center:

Shell-shaped cup and saucer

Vienna Porcelain Factory (Austrian, 1718–present)

Vienna, 1823

Porcelain
(26.12.1–2)



Inkwell

Popov Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1804–72)

After Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, 1740–present)

Gorbunovo, Russia, ca. 1820

Porcelain
(25.108.1–2)



Shell-shaped cup and saucer

Popov Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1804–72)

Gorbunovo, Russia, 1840s

Porcelain
(25.107.1–2)



Front right:

Pendant watch

Charpentier Oudin (Charles Oudin), watchmaker (French, 1797–present)

Lafon de Camarsac, photographer (French, 1821–1905)

Paris, 1866

Gold, enamel, mother-of-pearl, pearls, photograph, glass

(16.13)

(Image is on label)



Photographed by Edward Owen

This shell-shaped watch was an engagement present from Grand Duke Alexander, the future Emperor Alexander III of Russia, to his bride, Princess Dagmar of Denmark, the future Empress Maria Feodorovna.

Both countries' enameled coats of arms are featured on the piece. The shell-shaped case houses two small compartments: one for the watch's mechanism and the other for an enameled photograph of Grand Duke Alexander at left, hidden inside like a precious and treasured pearl.



Cartouche-shaped box

Sandoz (French, 1865–1931)
Gustave-Roger Sandoz, jeweler (French, 1867–1942)
Paris, ca. 1900
Rock crystal, gold
(11.245)



Clock

Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918)
Julius Rappoport, workmaster (Lithuanian, 1851–1917, active in the Russian Empire)
H. Moser & Cie, watchmaker (Swiss, 1828–present)
St. Petersburg, ca. 1893
Silver gilt, bowenite, emerald, ruby, pearl, watercolor on ivory
(12.155)

Section Panel

Treasures of the Sea

The ocean is the largest ecosystem on Earth and is home to about 240,000 known species, with, it is estimated, more than a million yet to be discovered. Human societies have benefited from the largesse of the ocean for thousands of years. Fishing, harvesting, trade, and tourism related to the ocean have developed and supported economic needs. Today, overexploitation of the ocean's resources and pollution have degraded its ecosystem. Regulations and better environmental management are crucial to preserve the ocean and all the societies, including Indigenous communities, that benefit from it. All the objects featured in this section were made from nautical materials, some from endangered species that are currently protected because they are at risk of disappearing.



Market Place in Naples

Carl Wilhelm Hahn (William Hahn), painter (German, 1829–1887)
Germany, ca. 1880
Oil on canvas
Gift of General Foods, 1978 (51.185)

This painting depicts a quiet scene on a quay in Naples, Italy, with the volcano Mount Vesuvius beyond the famous Bay of Naples. Peasants from the countryside sell their vegetables while fishermen rest in their small traditional boats. Hahn studied in Dresden and Düsseldorf, Germany, before settling in the United States for several years. A prolific artist, Hahn is mainly known for his decorative genre scenes like this one capturing everyday life.

Sub-section Panel



On stand:

Fish peddler

Vavila Sabanin Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1848–75)

After Johann Joachim Kändler (German, 1706–1775)

Vlasova, Russia, mid-1800s

Porcelain

(25.181)



Cup and saucer (*Gobelet Litron et Soucoupe*)

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, 1740–present)

Attributed to Jean-Louis Morin, decorator (French, 1732–1787)

Sèvres, France, ca. 1765

Soft-paste porcelain

(24.39.1–2)



Front:

Laplander fisherman from the “Peoples of Russia” series

Imperial Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1744–present)

Jacques-Dominique Rachette, sculptor (French, 1744–1809)

St. Petersburg, late 1700s

Porcelain

On loan from Kathleen Durdin (IL2017.1.10)



Box

Great Britain, ca. 1770

Enamel, copper, gilt copper

(15.145)



Tray

Great Britain, ca. 1775

Enamel, copper, gilt copper

(15.144)



Saucer

Imperial Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1744–present)

St. Petersburg, 1796–1801

Porcelain

(25.259)



Easter egg

Imperial Porcelain Factory (Russian, 1744–present)

St. Petersburg, 1860s–70s

Porcelain

On loan from Kathleen Durdin (IL2019.1.18)

All these objects are painted with scenes depicting harbors, ships, and merchandise alluding to the significance of ocean fishing, harvesting, trade, and exchanges in the 1700s–1800s.



On wall:

Catch of the Day

Courtney Mattison (American, b. 1985)

2017

Glazed stoneware, porcelain

Courtesy of the Artist

The “catch of the day” usually refers to fresh fish offered at a restaurant. In this life-size stoneware and porcelain work, Courtney Mattison illustrates sea life’s “catch of the day.” Corals bleached by warming seas hold “plastic utensils,” cast in porcelain, that allude to pollution and overfishing of the ocean, which have reached critical levels.

To learn more about the artist, please refer to her biography near her wall installation.

Sub-section Panel

Salt

As essential to human health as water, salt is a fundamental part of the ocean. Crucial to human cultures, salt has been exploited for thousands of years for food consumption and conservation. It is produced from salt mines and by evaporation of seawater. Saltcellars designed for table use are central to the setting. Their decor often refers to the ocean and its nautical world.



On stand:

Condiment dish

After Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, 1740–present)

France, mid-1700s–late 1800s

Porcelain

(24.29)



Saltcellar

J. D. Schleissner & Söhne (German, 1817–present)

Germany, 1900s

Vermeil

(12.295.1)



Front:

Saltcellar with a figurine of a Cossack

Miklashevskii Factory (Ukrainian, 1838–61)

Volokitino, Ukraine, 1838–61

Porcelain

(25.186)

Sub-section Panel

Dolphins

Often considered to be one of the most intelligent species on the planet, dolphins have inspired diverse cultures since ancient times and have mainly been depicted as helpers of humankind. In France between the 1300s and 1830s, the heir to the throne was given the title of “dauphin” (dolphin), and the marine mammal became part of the dauphins’ coat of arms. To this day, the French word refers to both the dolphin and an heir apparent. Today, industrial fishing methods, pollution, and climate change are a threat to dolphin populations around the globe.



On wall:

Bracket with intertwined dolphins

Great Britain, mid-1700s

Gilt wood

(34.47.1)



On stand:

Footed dish from a dessert service

Probably Jacob Petit (French, 1796–1868)

Demont, decorator (French, active 1830s)

Paris, ca. 1835

Hard-paste porcelain

(24.119.1)



Front:

Bowl on a stand

Berlin, 1819–42

Glass, silver

Gift of Anna Antik in memory of Marie Antik, 1976 (12.401)

Sub-section Panel

Whalebone

Whales are part of a group of marine mammals that includes the largest animal on earth. Whales have been hunted by humans for thousands of years for their blubber, which was used as a lamp fuel and a lubricant, and their meat. Baleen and bones were also used to craft and carve objects such as baskets and fashion accessories. Commercial whaling developed until the 1900s. In 1946, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was established to regulate whale fishing. In 1982, with some whale species at risk of extinction, members of the IWC voted for a moratorium on commercial whaling, later followed by the creation of two ocean whale sanctuaries. Whaling continues today, however, in particular by Japan, Norway, and Iceland, as well as small numbers of catches by some Indigenous peoples, permitted as part of their culture.



Corset

B. Altman and Company (American, 1865–1990)

New York, 1905

Silk, lace, whalebone, metal

(2014.5.1.1)

This corset bears a stamp stating that its structure is made from “Real whale bone” at a time when it was progressively replaced by other materials. After hours of boiling to soften the whalebone, the keratin-based material was cut into the appropriate dimensions to be inserted into corsets. When worn, body heat softened the

whalebone, which adapted to the body and made the corset more comfortable to wear. Real whalebone corsets like this one were a luxury accessory.

Sub-section Panel

Walrus

The walrus, a large marine mammal, was hunted for centuries off the northern coast of the Russian Empire as well in America for their hide, blubber, meat, and impressive tusks. Local communities carved walrus ivory into decorative objects. In Russia, an economy developed around this artisanship in Kholmogory. Today, walrus hunting is regulated, and the global trade of their tusks is restricted by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).



Box

Kholmogory, Russia, mid1700s
Walrus ivory, wood, foil
(36.28)



Table secretary

Kholmogory, Russia, mid 1700s
Walrus ivory, wood, silk
(36.125)

(Image is on label)



Sub-section Panel

Tortoiseshell

Tortoiseshell is a material formed from the shell of a tortoise or turtle, while the reptiles' meat can be consumed in a soup or stew. Thin sheets of tortoiseshell, sometimes artificially enhanced with red pigments or with metal reflecting foils applied to the reverse, have been widely used since antiquity for inlay work and as decorative elements in Western and Asian societies. The shells themselves were collected, with some specimens placed among groupings of objects in early museum-like settings in Europe that were called cabinets of curiosities. Due to excessive exploitation, the hawksbill turtle, which lives in warm waters, is listed among endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In 1973, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) prohibited the commercialization of tortoiseshells worldwide. Today, many synthetic substitutes imitate their unique color and finishes.



Back:

Plate

EJD Bodley (British, 1875–92)

Burslem, Staffordshire, Great Britain

Bone china

Gift of Mrs. Augustus Riggs, 1975 (26.158.1)



Crochet hook

Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918)

Henrik Immanuel Wigström, workmaster (Finnish, 1862–1923)

St. Petersburg, 1908–17

Gold, enamel, tortoiseshell, diamonds, amethyst
(11.85)



Paper knife

Mexico, mid-1900s

Silver, tortoiseshell

(12.337)



Front:

Box with allegorical scene

Naples, Italy, 1730–40

Tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, gold, silver

(36.116)



Oval box

Great Britain, 1700s

Tortoiseshell, silver

(36.52)



Rectangular box

France, 1814–30
Tortoiseshell, gold,
mother-of-pearl, silver
(36.47)



Round box
France, 1700s
Tortoiseshell, gold
(36.48)



Round box featuring the ocean liner *Berengaria*
Cohen & Charles (British, active 1890–1958)
London, 1923
Silver, tortoiseshell
(12.331.1–2)

Sub-section Panel

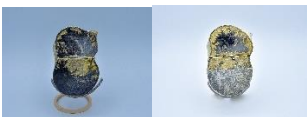
Seashell

Praised and collected for centuries as precious specimens for European cabinets of curiosities, as currency, and as tools in diverse human cultures, seashells have also been used as elaborate jewelry and decorative objects. Shells were also carved into cameos (small reliefs traditionally made from hardstone), mainly from helmet shells and queen conch shells since the mid-1700s. The queen conch is a large sea snail principally found in the Caribbean Sea and the tropical southwestern Atlantic Ocean. Threatened by pollution and overfished for their meat, pearls, and shell value, the queen conch population is declining.



Shell headpiece
1900s
Shell, metal, thread
(2014.7.16)

(Image is on label)



Two snuffboxes
After Jacques de Lajoüe (French, 1686/87–1761): niello scene
Veliky Ustyug, Russia, mid-1700s
Silver gilt, niello, turban snail shell
(13.5, 13.6)

These two snuffboxes are made from seashells mounted in a precious silver gilt setting. The top lid, when lifted, reveals the interior of the shell used to store the tobacco. Both are decorated with shells and other Rococo motifs and a scene with a sinking ship, Triton (a Greek deity of the sea) riding a hippocampus (a mythological horse-like sea monster), and a sea nymph, after a French design by Jacques de Lajoüe.



Letter opener

Harry Winston, Inc. (American, 1932–present)
New York, mid-1900s
Metal, shell
(14.142)



Cameo portraits

Workshop of Tommaso and Luigi Saulini (Italian, mid to late 1800s): cameos
Rome, mid-1800s: cameos
Moscow, late 1800s: setting
Shell, gold, enamel
(36.46)

Sub-section Panel

Mother-of-Pearl

Mother-of-pearl, also known as nacre, is a strong iridescent mineral and organic material produced by mollusks on the inside of their shell. It is the same material that composes pearls. Nacre, which can be artificially tinted, has been used in many decorative ways for thousands of years, including as a good alternative to bone or ivory to stop the heat transfer on metallic vessels. Boiled to be softened before being cut with a fine saw, mother-of-pearl serves as a beautiful source for inlay work. Its milky color and iridescent surface have made it a precious material used in the fashion and luxury goods industries.



On stand:

Coffeepot from a service

Ivan Andreev, silversmith (Russian, active 1883–96)
Moscow, 1888
Silver gilt, enamel, mother-of-pearl
(15.102.1)



Coffeepot from a service

Eleventh Artel (Russian, 1908–17)
Moscow, 1910
Silver gilt, enamel, mother-of-pearl
Gift of Mrs. Catherine B. Van Bomel, 1969 (15.203.1)



Teapot from a service

Gustav Klingert, silversmith (Russian, 1865–1916)
Moscow, 1899–1908
Silver gilt, enamel, mother-of-pearl
(15.112.1)



Teapot from a service

Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918)
First Artel, workshop (Russian, 1909–13)
St. Petersburg, 1909
Silver, mother-of-pearl
(12.379.6)



Front:

Shell-shaped snuffbox

Paris, 1722–27
Mother-of-pearl, gold, enamel
(11.1)



Box

Germany, 1740–60
Mother-of-pearl, gold
(11.2)



Domino set

Great Britain, 1800s
Mother-of-pearl, gold
(36.55)



Fruit knife from the service of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich

Nicholls and Plincke (Russian, 1829–98)
St. Petersburg, 1848–92
Silver gilt, mother-of-pearl, steel
(12.167.7)



Fist-shaped seal

Probably Russia, ca. 1840
Gold, garnets, mother-of-pearl
(11.139)



Icon of Saint George

Moscow, 1899–1908
Tempera on mother-of-pearl, silver gilt
(54.34)



Box with miniature portrait of Emperor Alexander I of Russia

Paris, early 1800s
Tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, gold
(36.141)



On wall:

Fan

ca. 1900
Lace, mother-of-pearl, silk, gouache
(49.26)



On lower shelf:

Necessaire

Jos. Sauerwein & Company, jeweler (Austrian, active 1800s)
Vienna, 1845
Wood, silver, textile, brass, mother-of-pearl
(34.21.1)



Heart-shaped table

French and Company, interior designer (American, 1907–present)

France, ca. 1928

Wood, mother-of-pearl, gilt bronze
(31.110.1)

Sub-section Panel

Coral

(Image is on label)



Coral is an animal that is actually made up of thousands of tiny invertebrates called polyps. Over time, the secretions from the polyps create a solid skeleton. Corals are the main contributors to ecosystems of tropical reefs. These ecosystems are crucial to marine life, which relies on them for food, shelter, and reproduction. Corals' colors, especially red, have been highly appreciated for decorative purposes. Overharvesting, pollution, and increased water temperatures as a result of climate change due to human activities harm reefs and threaten the coral's vital ecosystems.



On wall:

Ring

Cartier (French, 1847–present)

Paris, ca. 1930

Coral, onyx, diamond, platinum

Gift of Leah and Stanley Rumbough (2021.7.7)



Earrings

Cartier (French, 1847–present)

Paris, 1920s

Coral, onyx, diamond, platinum, enamel

Gift of Nina Rumbough (2021.6.7.1–2)



Bracelet

Cartier (French, 1847–present)

Paris, 1927

Coral, onyx, diamond, platinum

Gift of Nina Rumbough (2021.6.1)



Front:

Snuff bottle

China, ca. 1800

Coral, metal

(61.44)



Snuff bottle

China, probably 1800s

Lavender jadeite, coral, jade

(61.8)



Snuff bottle

China, ca. 1700

Cinnabar lacquer, metal, turquoise, coral

(61.49)



Back scratcher (?)

China, 1900s

Ivory, coral, metal

(36.144)



Inkwell

Cartier (French, 1847–present)

London, ca. 1925

Agate, gold, enamel, coral, diamonds, glass, metal

(21.144)



On stand:

Frame with miniature portrait of Marjorie Post's daughter Nedenia Hutton (later known as Dina Merrill)

Heuvel & Co., Inc., jeweler (American, active 1900s)

Malcolm Rae, miniaturist (American, active 1920s–50s)

After Frank O. Salisbury (British, 1874–1962)
New York, before 1938
Agate, gold, coral, diamonds, watercolor on ivory
(21.128)



Frame with miniature portrait of Marjorie Post's daughter Nedenia Hutton (later known as Dina Merrill)

Cartier (French, 1847–present)
Malcolm Rae, miniaturist (American, active 1920s–50s)
New York, 1935
Gold, agate, enamel, coral, diamonds, watercolor on ivory, glass
(21.118.1–2)



Front:

Monogrammed box

Cartier
(French, 1847–present)
New York, ca. 1935
Silver, jade, coral
(12.396)



Box

Marcel Wolfers, designer (Belgian, 1886–1976)
Fernand Colin (French, 1889–1961)
Brussels, 1937
Malachite, coral, Borassus wood, ivory, silver
(21.106)

(Image is on label)



On the walls:

Seascape near Capri

1932
Oil on canvas
(51.105)

(Image is on label)



Seascape

Alexander Dzigurski, painter (American, born in present-day Serbia, 1911–1995)

United States, second half 1900s

Oil on canvas

(51.124)

(Image is on label)



Breezy Day in Cornwall

David James, painter (British, 1853–1904)

Great Britain, late 1800s

Oil on canvas

(51.224)

Section Case Panel

Pearls

(Image is on label)



Pearls are made by mollusks as a protection against irritants that get into their soft tissue. The mollusk secretes deposits in concentric layers. The most precious pearls are perfectly spherical, while irregular ones are known as baroque pearls. Seed pearls are small-scale natural pearls developed in a saltwater oyster or freshwater mussel. Harvested for centuries, natural pearls have been praised as gems and mainly used in jewelry. Extremely rare, natural pearls were quickly replaced by the development of cultured pearls during the 1900s.



On wall:

Portrait of Empress Alexandra Feodorovna

Russia, 1906–7

Oil on canvas

(51.81)



Left:

Headdress (Kokoshnik)

Kostroma, Russia, late 1700s–early 1800s

Silk, linen, cotton, gold, plate, thread, gold-wrapped silk thread, silverwrapped silk thread, seed pearls, turquoise, colored stones, colored pastes

Museum Purchase, 2006 (47.52)



Center:

Headdress (Kokoshnik)

Russia, 1800s

Seed pearls, paste stones

(47.1)



Miniature crown

Russia, late 1700s

Silver gilt, seed pearls, rubies

(12.211)



Right:

Earrings

Russia, 1700s–1800s

Gold, seed pearls, amethyst

(17.50.1–2)



Earrings

Probably Bukhara, Uzbekistan, 1800s

Gold, paste stones, seed pearls

(17.48.1–2)



Miniature portrait of Grand Duchess Alexandra Nikolaevna

Ivan Winberg, miniaturist (Swedish, d. 1851, active in the Russian Empire)

St. Petersburg, before 1844

Watercolor on ivory, gilt bronze

(53.51)

Sub-section Case Panel



On wall:

Portrait of Marjorie Merriweather Post

Malcolm Rae, painter (American, active 1920s–50s)

New York, 1936

Oil on canvas

(51.152)



Back left to right:

Necklace

Cartier (French, 1847–present)

New York, 1900s

Pearls, diamonds, platinum

Bequest of Mrs. Augustus Riggs, 1999 (17.86)



Necklace

Cartier (French, 1847–present)

Caro Yamaoka (American, 1911–1991)

New York, 1936–63

Pearls, diamonds, platinum

(17.69)



Necklace and earrings

George Headley, designer (American, 1908–1985)

Charles Vaillant, jeweler (American, 1920–present)

New York/Lexington, KY, 1966

Baroque pearls, moonstones, diamonds, platinum

(17.74.1–3)



Brooch

New York, ca. 1960
Diamond, conch pearl, gold, coral
Gift of Leah and Stanley Rumbough (2021.7.3)



Earrings

Cartier (French, 1847–present)
New York, 1920s
Conch pearl, onyx and diamond earrings
Gift of Leah and Stanley Rumbough (2021.7.6.1–2)



Devant de corsage brooch

Cartier (French, 1847–present)
New York, 1929
Diamond, conch pearl, coral, platinum
Gift of Nina Rumbough (2021.6.4)



Ring

Cartier (French, 1847–present)
New York, 1920s
Diamond, conch pearl, enamel, onyx, platinum
Gift of Leah and Stanley Rumbough (2021.7.8)



Front left to right:

Belt buckle

Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918)
Mikhail Perkhin, workmaster
(Russian, 1860–1903)
St. Petersburg, 1899–1903
Silver gilt, enamel, pearls
(12.142)



Frame with portrait of Marjorie Post's daughter Nedenia Hutton (later known as Dina Merrill)

Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918)
Mikhail Perkhin, workmaster (Russian, 1860–1903)
St. Petersburg, 1899–1903: frame
Malcolm Rae, miniaturist (American, active 1920s–50s)
New York, ca. 1936: miniature portrait
Gold, enamel, ivory, diamonds, rubies, pearls
(11.68.1–2)



Box
Bolin (Swedish, active in the Russian Empire, 1791–present)
Konstantin Linke, workmaster
(Russian, active late 1800s–early 1900s)
Moscow, 1899–1908
Silver, enamel, rose-cut diamonds, mabe pearls
Museum Purchase, 2011 (2011.1)



Figurine of a Harlequin
Germany, 1600s
Gold, enamel, rubies, baroque pearl, diamonds
(11.136)



Table clock
Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918)
Mikhail Perkhin, workmaster (Russian, 1860–1903)
St. Petersburg, 1898–1903
Silver, enamel, ivory, gold, pearls, diamonds, glass
(11.90)



Pocket watch
Switzerland, early 1800s
Gold, enamel, pearls, turquoise
(16.15)



Pocket watch
Switzerland, early 1800s
Gold, enamel, pearls, turquoises
(16.20)

Wall panel



The Breakers

Thomas Rose Miles, painter (British, 1844–1916)
Great Britain, late 1800s–early 1900s
Oil on canvas
Gift of General Foods, 1978 (51.205)

Thomas Rose Miles was a British artist who specialized in seascapes capturing the power of the ocean, as shown in this dramatic scene on a stormy day. The small ship on the horizon is the only sign of human presence in this ode to powerful and wild nature.



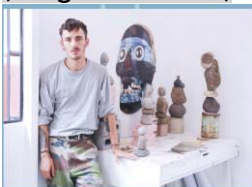
Off St. Ives

David James, painter (British, 1853–1904)
Great Britain, late 1800s
Oil on canvas
Gift of General Foods, 1978 (51.193)

British painter David James specialized in seascapes focusing on the rendering of the waves. Purchased in London in 1905, this painting is an early art acquisition by Marjorie Post and followed her in different residences from Connecticut to New York to Battle Creek, Michigan, where it adorned the museum dedicated to the family company founded in 1895. It speaks to Marjorie Post's early interest in the ocean.

Wall panel

(Image in on label)



Marie Taillefe



On floor:

Squelette (Skeleton)

Théo Mercier (French, b. 1984)
2021
White onyx, marble
Courtesy of mor Charpentier

In this artwork, Théo Mercier explores the connections between everyday objects and the ocean, inviting visitors to reflect on the ecological footprint of these objects through their production, consumption, circulation, and destruction.

Théo Mercier (French, born 1984) is a sculptor and stage director based in Paris and Marseille. Mercier revisits the narratives of history, and the ways objects are traditionally represented. As a collector and creator at the same time, Mercier stages objects and explores materials to inspire rich dialogues between past, present, and future, what is real and what's not, artisanship and mass production, life and death, among other concepts that invite us to rethink the world. Mercier's work has been featured in many acclaimed exhibitions in France and internationally and is represented in private and public collections.

(Image in on label)



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On nearby wall:

Aqueduct

Courtney Mattison (American, b. 1985)

2016

Glazed stoneware and porcelain

Courtesy of the Artist

Crucial to marine life, coral reefs are threatened by overfishing, pollution, and climate change. In this astonishing installation of hundreds of porcelain marine creatures, Courtney Mattison imagines how the increase in sea temperature forced tropical species to migrate farther north, where they would invade the land soon to be overflowed by rising water levels. They are featured here entering the gallery through a hand-carved porcelain air duct register.

Courtney Mattison (American, born 1985) is a San Francisco-based environmental artist who creates elaborate ceramic sculptural installations, sometimes including more than a thousand pieces, inspired by her background in marine ecology. Mattison's rich sculptures of marine organisms illustrate their vulnerability in the age of human-caused climate change, with delicate ceramic elements that reflect the fragile beauty of living coral reef invertebrates. Internationally recognized, Mattison has had works featured in many exhibitions and museums. In 2020, her work was published on a U.N. stamp to commemorate Earth Day.

Map panel

(Image is on label)



The Ocean Starts Here

Today, ocean pollution is reaching alarming levels. Even here on Hillwood's land, any litter might end up in the sea due to the complex water cycle. The rain washes the land, feeding rivers that flow into the ocean. Every year, millions of tons of plastic enter the sea from the waste produced by human societies, often single-use plastic objects.

Hillwood's Environmental Action Team (HEAT) is a staff initiative that engages in various sustainable actions to protect biodiversity by implementing best practices in horticulture, reduce energy consumption, and encourage recycling, including exhibition display cases and materials.

The watershed that drains into the Chesapeake Bay is a huge expanse that extends 64,000 miles into six states across North America (New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the District of Columbia.

Source: NASA

LAKE ERIE
NEW YORK
PENNSYLVANIA
MARYLAND
WEST VIRGINIA
WASHINGTON, DC
DELAWARE
VIRGINIA
CHESAPEAKE BAY
ATLANTIC OCEAN